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Athens Responding More Aggressively to Turkish Overflights

The Greeks are responding more aggressively to Turkish overflights of the Aegean islands because they believe that Ankara is testing their resolve on the Aegean sovereignty issue. The Turks, however, may be attempting to ascertain to what extent the Greeks are violating the treaties which forbid the stationing of military forces on some Aegean islands.

Greek Defense Minister Averoff on March 27 told Ambassador Kubisch this was the reason the Greek government had authorized commanders to open fire on the Turkish planes and Greek fighters to intercept the Turkish aircraft.

Averoff said that—in addition to the overflights last week—there had been at least four
additional flights over Greek air space yesterday.
Two were over Chios, one over Lesbos and one over
Samos. In accordance with instructions, Greek
personnel on the islands fired at the Turkish
aircraft with 40 mm automatic weapons. The US
ambassador described the firing as "symbolic" and
believes that the Greeks did not wish to hit the
aircraft but simply to raise the level of the
Greek response as a further warning to the Turks.

The Turkish planes were well out of the range of the Greek weapons and the interceptor aircraft from Limnos arrived after the Turkish aircraft had left. The reinforcement of some of the islands in recent weeks contravenes the terms of international treaties. The Turks may be attempting to acquire photographic evidence to support the

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aide memoire they circulated last week charging Athens with violating the treaties.

Ankara, which has been trying to assert its claim to oil exploration rights in the Aegean and challenge Greek sovereignty there, may also be feeling Athens out in the same way it did last spring when it sent a hydrographic vessel into the disputed areas with a naval escort.

The absence of a strong government in Ankara and firm lines of authority increases the danger of a military incident in the Aegean that might be difficult to contain.

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Dutch Economy Favors the Common Man

In 1975 the arable crop farmer working a modern 75-acre farm in Holland will get a lower return for his labor than his own farmhand. This was the conclusion of a survey done by a regional agricultural organization in southwest Holland. It claimed the average farmer would net approximately 15 percent less this year than his hired hand. The authors of the report blame the situation on complete failure of the EC agricultural policy and the lack of a Dutch agricultural policy.

Dutch soldiers fare even better than farm hands when compared with salaries in other European armies. The French conscript, for example, gets only 75 francs per month while his counterpart in the West German army receives 302 francs monthly. The Dutch conscript, a member of western Europe's only unionized army, gets a whopping 885 francs.

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Alberta's Progressive-Conservatives Sweep Provincial Election

The landslide victory won by Premier Lougheed's Progressive-Conservative Party in Alberta's provincial elections has virtually wiped out political opposition and provided him the popular mandate he requested for next month's federal-provincial energy conference.

In the March 26 elections, Lougheed's party won 69 of the 75 seats in the provincial assembly while his chief opposition, the Social Credit Party, dropped from 24 seats to 4. The leftwing New Democratic Party barely maintained its one seat and the Liberals failed to win a single seat in the 45 constituencies when they entered candidates. The Social Credit Party, which prior to Lougheed's 1971 victory, had controlled the government for thirty years was virtually destroyed as a political factor in the province.

Although a big Progressive-Conservative win was never in doubt, the magnitude of Lougheed's victory surprised even his most ardent supporters. The key to Lougheed's sweep was his ability to present himself as the spokesman for Alberta against the commercial and political interests of eastern Canada which he maintains are intent on perpetuating "the master-servant relationship" between Ottawa and Alberta. Now that Alberta's oil and natural gas resources have supplemented its agricultural wealth to make it "the Texas of Canada," Albertans feel they have the economic muscle to call the tune in the struggle over provincial-federal supremacy.

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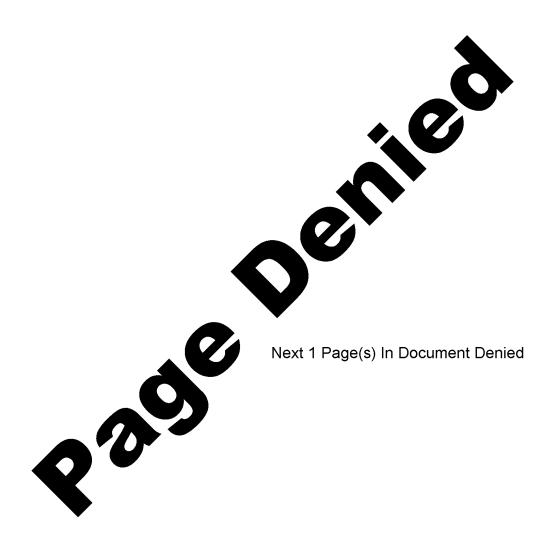
Lougheed has skillfully combined provincial loyalty with a new prosperity built upon what he terms Alberta's "non-renewable resources" to strengthen his party's control of the province. He can be expected to press Ottawa even harder on the issue of securing higher prices for oil and natural gas, even though consumers in Ontario and Quebec as well as in the United States will have to pay the increased costs. He will also insist that the federal government back down on its determination to tax the oil industry on royalties paid to the province.

The impressive victory by Lougheed's Progressive-Conservative Party does not augur well for future relations between Ottawa and Alberta which is rapidly replacing Quebec as the federal govenment's chief provincial headache.

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British Pre-referendum Campaign about to Begin

Both pro and anti-EC forces can claim they are ahead as Britain prepares to launch the campaign for the June referendum on whether to remain in the EC. The most significant events of the past week were:

- -- the introduction of the referendum bill to parliament; debate will begin on April 7;
- -- the inconclusive outcome of several meetings of the Labor Party and trade union groups have enabled both sides to claim victory;
- -- the formal opening of their campaign by pro-marketeers.

The referendum bill which provides details of the government's plans for holding the referendum, includes three proposals that differ from those published last month in the white paper:

--the government is willing to allow the vote to be tallied on a county basis rather than on a national basis and the government will allow members of parliament to disregard party discipline on this question. This will satisfy one of the major complaints of the nationalist parties in parliament, which want the vote to be tallied on a regional basis;

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- --the parenthetical phrase "Common Market" will be inserted following the term "EC" in the referendum question. The anti-marketeers believe this addition will help their case;
- -- the government plans to allocate less money to various referendum campaign organizations than originally proposed.

The National Executive Committee of the Labor Party, which met this week to plan its pre-referendum strategy, approved a strong anti-EC resolution but decided that it should be submitted to local party organizations and not to the special party conference to be held on April 26. The committee also approved a statement that calls for complete freedom of choice for party members on the EC issue. Both Prime Minister Wilson and the anti-marketeers claimed that the meeting produced gains for their positions.

The executive committee of the Trades Union Congress apparently decided to continue its opposition to EC membership. The union organization probably will not hold a special conference on the question and this should reduce the potential divisiveness of the issue within the trade union movement. The Congress still has not decided how actively it will campaign.

Meanwhile, the pro-marketeers headed by Home Secretary Jenkins formed the "Britain in Europe" committee--an all-party organization. The group includes such prominant political figures as deputy Tory party leader Whitelaw,

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former Tory head Heath, and Foreign Secretary Maudling. The committee's first job will be to develop a campaign that is vigorous enough to match the momentum already built up by the anti-marketeers.

The latest Gallup poll shows that over 60 percent of the electorate plans to vote in the referendum and that 76 percent professed an interest in whether Britain remains a member of the EC. On the question of whether Eritain was right or wrong in joining the EC two years ago, 44 percent said the country was right; 38 percent said wrong.

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